

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 ACDA-12 OMB-01
/103 W

-----015506 041155Z /41

R 040616Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7207

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 6856

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, KE
SUBJECT: MAY DAY RALLY POORLY ORGANIZED AND COLORLESS

1. TRADITIONAL MAY DAY LABOR RALLY WAS THIS YEAR POORLY ORGANIZED, POORLY ATTENDED AND COLORLESS. ACCORDING CENTRAL ORGANIZATION OF TRADE UNION (COTU) SOURCES, SECGEN JUMA BOY HAD BEEN OUT OF COUNTRY THROUGH MUCH OF APRIL AND IN HIS ABSENCE NOTHING WAS DONE TO ORGANIZE EVENT. INVITATIONS TO PARTICIPATE WERE NEVER RECEIVED BY MINISTER OF LABOR NYAMWEYA AND BY MAJOR UNIONS NOT AFFILIATED WITH COTU, WITH RESULT THAT NEITHER LABOR MINISTRY NOR THESE UNIONS TOOK PART.

2. CROWDS AT RALLY WERE SPARCE LEADING NAIROBI PROVINCIAL COMMISSIONER AND A CITY COUNCILLOR TO CHASTISE WORKERS FOR LACK OF ENTHUSIAM.

3. SPEECHES GIVEN BY JUMA BOY AND COTU CHAIRMAN OMIDO WERE LACKLUSTER. CONTRARY TO LAST YEAR WHEN LABOR LEADERS MADE HARD-HITTING ATTACKS ON GOVERNMENT WAGE POLICY AND DEMANDED INCREASE IN MINIMUM WAGE, SPEECHES THIS TIME WERE RELATIVELY SUBDUED. OMIDO CHARACTERIZED EXISTING WAGE GUIDELINES AS PROTECTING EMPLOYERS BUT EMPHASIS WAS

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ON NEED TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE HOUSING FOR WORKERS. JUMA BOY SAID A WAY SHOULD BE FOUND TO COMPEL EMPLOYERS TO PROVIDE HOUSES FOR THEIR WORKERS, BUT HE MADE NO SPECIFIC PROPOSALS AS TO HOW THIS SHOULD BE DONE.

4. COMMENT: MAY DAY RALLY, WHILE NOT IN ITSELF SIGNIFICANT, IS FURTHER INDICATION THAT KENYAN LABOR IS IN DOLDRUMS.

WHILE MINISTER OF LABOR UNDERSTANDS COTU'S ADMINISTRATIVE
BUNGLING AND IS NOT OFFENDED BY FAILURE TO BE
INVITED TO RALLY SAME IS NOT TRUE FOR MINISTER OF FINANCE
KIBAKI. JUMA BOY TOLD RALLY THAT KIBAKI HAD BEEN INVITED
TO BE GUEST SPEAKER, BUT HAD NOT TURNED UP. KIBAKI TOOK
OPPORTUNITY OF PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE MAY 2 ON DIFFERENT
SUBJECT TO SHARPLY DENY THAT HE HAD ACCEPTED TO BE GUEST
SPEAKER. HE THREATENED TO SUE JUMA BOY FOR DEFAMATION
OF CHARACTER. WHAT WAS ALMOST CERTAINLY GRATUITOUS
DISTORTION OF FACTS BY JUMA BOY, INTENDED AS CROWD
PLEASER, MAY TURN OUT TO COMPLICATE HIS RELATIONS WITH
KIBAKI, WHO IS ONE OF MOST POWERFUL MEN IN KENYA.
LE MELLE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, MAY DAY, COMMEMORATIVE CELEBRATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NAIROB06856
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780190-0588
Format: TEL
From: NAIROBI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780593/aaaadbvp.tel
Line Count: 75
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 33e498a4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2793577
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MAY DAY RALLY POORLY ORGANIZED AND COLORLESS
TAGS: ELAB, KE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/33e498a4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014